

October 2007

Dear friends and neighbors,

It's property tax time again. As homeowners prepare to pay their taxes for the second half of this year (due October 31), I'm reminded of the extraordinary burden property tax bills place on many low-income seniors.

I remain very concerned for homeowners whose taxes rise faster than their incomes. For this reason, I have worked in the Legislature to reduce the tax burden for all of our homeowners and property owners. This past session, I co-sponsored legislation to reinstate the 1 percent property tax levy limit that was struck down last year by a King County judge. I also co-sponsored House Bill 1629 and House Bill 2039 to increase the number of senior citizens and the disabled who could qualify for property tax relief. Unfortunately, these measures died in the 2007 session. However, I will continue the fight to provide meaningful property tax relief for our citizens.

I believe government's claim to tax revenue should never be the cause for people to lose their homes. At some point, we have to say, "you own your home, and we will not allow government to take that away from you."

This pamphlet describes how you can take advantage of the tax breaks that are now available for seniors.

As always, I'm interested in hearing from you about this or any other issue regarding state government. You may call or write my office using the address and phone information listed below.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you!



Rep. Judy Warnick
13th District

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Are You Getting the Property Tax Breaks You Deserve?



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1-800-562-6000

To e-mail me or for more legislative news and information, please visit my website at: <http://www.houserepublicans.wa.gov/Warnick>

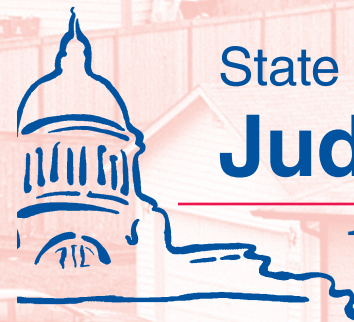
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Important
Property Tax
Information for
Senior Citizens

Important Property Tax Information for Senior Citizens



Are You Getting the Property Tax Breaks You Deserve?



State Representative
Judy Warnick
13th Legislative District

Senior Citizen Property Tax Relief

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

Who qualifies?

The Legislature has expanded the number of seniors who qualify for property tax exemptions.

You may qualify for property tax exemptions if you meet all of the following criteria:

- You are at least 61 years of age or disabled.
- You occupy your home for more than six months each year.
- Your combined household income does not exceed \$35,000.



Expenses for Medicare health care insurance premiums, prescription drugs, in-home care, and the costs of care in a nursing home, boarding home or an adult family home may be deducted when calculating your income. You also can remain eligible for tax relief if you are confined to a hospital, nursing home, boarding home, or an adult family home if your residence is rented to pay the costs.

Valuation limit

Qualifying citizens are entitled to property tax exemptions on their principal residence and up to five acres of land. Mobile homes may qualify, even if the land where the mobile home is located is leased or rented. The value of the residence is frozen at its value on Jan. 1 of the year in which you first qualify for the program, or Jan. 1, 1995, whichever is later.

Exemption Schedule

You are eligible for the following exemptions if your combined household income falls within the range indicated:

<u>Income</u>	<u>Exemption</u>
\$30,001 to \$35,000	All excess levies (<i>special school levies are an example of excess levies</i>).
\$25,001 to \$30,000	All excess levies and regular levies on the greater of \$50,000 or 35 percent of assessed valuation (<i>\$70,000 maximum</i>).
\$25,000 or less	All excess levies and regular levies on the greater of \$60,000 or 60 percent of assessed valuation.

PROPERTY TAX DEFERRALS

If you are at least 60 years of age on Dec. 31 of the year you apply, or retired because of physical disability – and your disposable income is \$40,000 or less – you may qualify for property tax deferrals. The state allows property tax deferrals up to 80 percent of the equity in your home. The deferral program applies to your principal residence and up to five acres. Mobile homes may qualify as your residence, even if you do not own the land where the mobile home is located.

Under this program, you pay no property tax until the home is sold. The state pays the deferred taxes and, in exchange, receives a lien against the property equal to the amount of owed taxes plus 8 percent. Total taxes are collected when the property is sold or passed on.

→ How to apply for property tax relief

For information on both property tax exemptions and deferrals, call your county assessor:

Grant County Assessor (509) 754-2011, Ext. 325 or 383
Kittitas County Assessor..... (509) 962-7501
Yakima County Assessor..... (509) 574-1100

For more information about our state's property tax laws, call:
Washington State Department of Revenue..... 1-800-647-7706

ADDITIONAL REDUCTIONS

The following exemptions are available to all homeowners:

Remodeling

If you improve your single family residence such as adding a new room, deck or patio, you may qualify for a three-year exemption on the value of the improvements. Normal maintenance does not qualify. This exemption is available to all homeowners. **Be sure to contact the assessor's/treasurer's office before you finish your remodel project. Otherwise, you won't get the break.**

Damaged/Destroyed Property

If your property is damaged or destroyed, you may qualify for a reduced assessed value for taxes payable in the following year. Contact your assessor's office for the proper forms.

Current Use/Open Space program

Owners of agricultural lands, open space or timberland may qualify for reduced assessed value under the current use/open space program. Please note that taxes, penalties and interest charges may apply when property is removed from this classification. Check with your assessor's office for more information.

Rep. Judy Warnick
speaks in favor
of property tax
relief on the floor
of the House of
Representatives.



What are your thoughts?

I'd like to hear from you regarding property taxes or any other issue that involves state government. Please contact me and share your thoughts.

Rep. Judy Warnick

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